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Letter dated 19 February 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter dated 19 February 2003 from Mr. Naji Sabri, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq, containing Iraq's reply to the allegations made in the statement by the United States Secretary of State at the Security Council meeting held on 5 February 2003 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have this letter and its annex circulated as a Security Council document.

(*Signed*) Mohammed A. **Aldouri**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex to the letter dated 19 February 2003 from the Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I should like to refer to the statement made to the Security Council on 5 February 2003 by Mr. Colin Powell, Secretary of State of the United States of America, in which he gave a 90-minute presentation that included allegations, fabrications, blatant lies, false accusations and distortion of facts. In return, the Iraqi representative was given just seven minutes to comment, a period which was insufficient to refute all the allegations.

I should like to bring to your attention our detailed comments on the contents of Mr. Powell's statement:

I. General remarks

1. According to paragraph 10 of Security Council resolution 1441 (2002), Mr. Powell should have provided to the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) all information possessed by his Government related to prohibited programmes, so that both bodies could proceed immediately with their investigations and inform the Security Council of the veracity of such information. Mr. Powell, however, decided to use the Security Council in a public meeting to put forward his allegations with the aim of promoting American aggressive intentions against Iraq among the American public and misleading the Security Council.

2. The American Secretary of State did not used appropriate diplomatic language befitting the prestige of the Security Council to describe Iraqi national political institutions, which is unfortunate and unbecoming of a Secretary of State of an administration which claims to be civilized.

3. In his statement, Mr. Powell concentrated on the so-called "gravity of the threat that Iraq's weapons of mass destruction pose to the world", and his concern about the implementation of the relevant Security Council resolutions. Within less than 24 hours of this statement, Mr. Powell announced before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations that the aims of the United States were to occupy Iraq, reorganize the geopolitical map of the Middle East and establish better conditions for Israel. Thus, Mr. Powell has explicitly revealed that the question is not about alleged Iraqi weapons of mass destruction but about United States schemes to occupy Iraq, loot its oil, and dominate the region and its resources as a first step towards dominating the world and pursuing an all-out policy of power and hegemony.

II. Detailed remarks

4. Mr. Powell said that "the Council placed the burden on Iraq to comply and disarm, and not on the inspectors to find that which Iraq has gone out of its way to conceal for so long. Inspectors are inspectors; they are not detectives".

Iraq has presented all that was asked of it. In 1993, the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) said that it had completed 95 per cent of its disarmament tasks. In 1992, IAEA stated that it had neutralized the former Iraqi nuclear programme. Demanding that Iraq should prove a negative and claiming the presence

of concealed weapons inside Iraq without submitting proof involves illegal political purposes. With regard to the allegations that the inspectors have been unable to expose the presence of proscribed weapons, the best reply is what Mr. ElBaradei said at the Council on 14 January 2003: "IAEA's experience in nuclear verification shows that it is possible, particularly with an intrusive verification system, to assess the presence or absence of a nuclear weapons programme in a State even without the full cooperation of the inspected State".

5. Mr. Powell said that "I asked for this meeting today for two purposes: first, to support the core assessments made by Mr. Blix and Mr. ElBaradei. As Mr. Blix reported to the Council on 27 January, '... Iraq appears not to have come to a genuine acceptance — not even today — of the disarmament that was demanded of it'".

Mr. Powell misquoted Mr. Blix, whose statement was made as a comparison between what South Africa had done in terms of unilaterally eliminating its nuclear weapons voluntarily and what had been imposed on Iraq in terms of disarming under Security Council resolutions. In several paragraphs of his statement on 27 January 2003, Mr. Blix made references to Iraqi cooperation, such as its cooperation relating to "the procedures, mechanisms, infrastructure and practical arrangements to pursue inspections and seek verifiable disarmament".

6. Mr. Powell went on quoting, in a disjointed manner, Mr. ElBaradei: "As Mr. ElBaradei reported, Iraq's declaration of 7 December '... did not provide any new information relevant to certain questions that have been outstanding since 1998'".

Mr. Powell took this sentence out of context, which, in Mr. ElBaradei's words, was: "The Iraqi declaration was consistent with our existing understanding of Iraq's pre-1991 nuclear programme; however, it did not provide any new information relevant to certain questions that have been outstanding since 1998, in particular regarding Iraq's progress prior to 1991 related to weapons design and centrifuge development. While these questions do not constitute unresolved disarmament issues, they nevertheless need further clarification".

7. As to the telephone conversations presented by Mr. Powell, any amateur or any low-grade intelligence agency — not a high-tech State in terms of espionage, fabrication, deception, misinformation and the planting of false evidence like the United States — could have fabricated such conversations. As is known to anyone with a rudimentary knowledge of law, such conversations are inadmissible in a court of law.

8. Mr. Powell mentioned that "Iraq has a high-level committee to monitor the inspectors who were sent in to monitor Iraq's disarmament. Not to cooperate with them, not to assist them".

In fact there is a committee whose aim is to facilitate the work of the inspectors and direct Iraqi agencies to cooperate with them and do what is possible to expedite their work. The reports of Mr. Blix and Mr. ElBaradei on Iraqi cooperation confirm that. The inspectors have never faced any obstacles.

9. Mr. Powell said that Iraq has "made no effort to disarm as required by the international community. Indeed, the facts and Iraq's behaviour show that Saddam

Hussein and his regime are concealing their efforts to produce more weapons of mass destruction".

This statement is not based on evidence. The production of weapons of mass destruction cannot be concealed. On 14 February 2003, Mr. Blix and Mr. ElBaradei informed the Security Council that the intensive inspections and monitoring they have carried out since 27 November 2002 have not indicated any presence of weapons of mass destruction inside Iraq.

10. Mr. Powell said: "You saw the result. Mr. Blix pronounced the 12,200-page declaration rich in volume but poor in information and practically devoid of new evidence. Could any member of this Council honestly rise in defence of this false declaration?".

We have no idea on what basis Mr. Powell made this judgement. He presented this judgement as Mr. Blix's. In reality, there is no such reference in the report made by Mr. Blix. Mr. Powell deliberately misquoted Mr. Blix's statement, so as to be able to utter this falsehood. Mr. Blix's report indicated that the declaration did not include any new clarifications or additional documentation that would support the settlement of the disarmament issues pending since 1998. Mr. Blix has never said that that declaration was false. Mr. Blix, however, mentioned in his report to the Security Council on 27 January 2003 that "in the fields of missiles and biotechnology, the declaration contains a good deal of new material and information covering the period from 1998 and onward. This is welcome". As for Mr. ElBaradei, he mentioned in his report to the Security Council on 27 January 2003 that: "The Iraqi declaration was consistent with our existing understanding of Iraq's pre-1991 nuclear programme". So, which is false, the declaration or Mr. Powell's allegation?

11. Mr. Powell accused the Iraqi authorities of "the removal of all prohibited weapons from palace complexes".

Mr. Powell continues to adhere to the false and malicious belief that presidential sites (which are offices and guest houses) are stores for weapons of mass destruction, which is utterly illogical. In 1998, inspection teams had access to presidential sites and took samples from floors, walls, soil and trees, which proved all the allegations made by the American Administration in the second half of 1997 and the first half of 1998 to be false. In December 2002, inspectors revisited two presidential sites, performing all checks or examinations that proved that such palaces had none of the items alleged by Mr. Powell.

12. Mr. Powell said that "thanks to intelligence provided to them, the inspectors recently found dramatic confirmation of these reports. When they searched the home of an Iraqi nuclear scientist, they uncovered roughly 2,000 pages of documents".

Iraq has clarified that the contents of the documents belonging to this Iraqi scientist (Dr. Falleh) were provided to IAEA in 1994 through Mr. Gary Dillon, chief of the IAEA working group, as indicated in its report of 24 September 1994. So, where is the incident that Mr. Powell deemed to be a material breach? Dr. Falleh kept copies of reports prepared partially by him for the purposes of obtaining a promotion. As is known, such reports are academic rather than scientific in nature. It seems that Mr. Powell has reached an erroneous and baseless conclusion when he considers such reports to be proof of a material breach.

13. In his statement, Mr. Powell said "Our sources tell us that in some cases, the hard drives of computers at Iraqi weapons facilities were replaced. Who took the hard drives? Where did they go? What is being hidden? There is only one answer to the 'why' — it is to deceive, to hide, to keep from the inspectors".

Before being a Secretary of State, Mr. Powell was a military man. He knows very well that military sites are not weapons factories. It is natural for such sites to have a great deal of organizational and administrative information which is totally irrelevant to the mandate of the inspection teams and to weapons of mass destruction. If any administrative or organizational information has been unavailable in such sites, this does not mean that information relevant to the work of inspectors has been concealed.

14. Mr. Powell said that "numerous human sources tell us that the Iraqis are moving not just documents and hard drives but also weapons of mass destruction to keep them from being found by inspectors. We know from sources that while we were here in this Council Chamber debating resolution 1441 (2002) last fall, a missile brigade outside Baghdad was dispersing rocket launchers and warheads containing biological warfare agent to various locations in western Iraq".

If Mr. Powell had been telling the truth, such information would have been immediately made available to the inspectors, who would have gone to the missile launching site to verify the allegations.

15. Mr. Powell said that "most of the launchers and warheads had been hidden in large groves of palm trees and were to be moved every one to four weeks to escape detection".

This sentence is quoted in its entirety from an interview with the commander of the Iraqi missile brigade, when he was asked how he had been able to avoid the detection and destruction of these missiles during the 30 nation aggression in 1991. Using an old incident in bad faith, Mr. Powell transformed the Iraqi officer's statement into a deliberate accusation. If there was concealment of missiles and warheads under way, why did Mr. Powell not submit such information to UNMOVIC with a view to verifying it? Mr. Powell's statement is inaccurate.

16. Mr. Powell presented a variety of satellite photos, saying that "we also have satellite photos that indicate that banned materials have recently been moved from a number of Iraqi facilities for weapons of mass destruction". He then added that "The painstaking work of photo analysis takes experts with years and years of experience poring for hours and hours over light tables. But as I show you these images I will explain what they mean, what they indicate to our imagery specialists".

Mr. Powell believed that that presentation of satellite photos to non-specialists would make them take the photos as fact. One of the photos presented by Mr. Powell is of a weapons storehouse at Al Taji, taken on 22 December 2002. It shows a warehouse that can be seen from the street. Mr. Powell alleged that it was a chemical weapons site that had been cleared of chemical weapons a few weeks earlier. Therefore, inspectors found nothing when they arrived at the site. UNMOVIC and IAEA have taken note of and verified Mr. Powell's allegations and photos. In his report to the Security Council on 14 February 2003, Mr. Blix commented on this allegation. We are satisfied with his comment, which reads as follows: "The presentation of intelligence information by the United States Secretary of State suggested that Iraq had prepared for inspections by cleaning up

sites and removing evidence of proscribed weapons programmes. I would like to comment only on one case, with which we are familiar, namely, the trucks identified by analysts as being for chemical decontamination at a munitions depot. This was a declared site, and it was certainly one of the sites Iraq would have expected us to inspect. We have noted that the two satellite images of the site were taken several weeks apart. The reported movement of munitions at the site could just as easily have been a routine activity".

17. Mr. Powell presented a satellite photo of the Al Fattah missile inspection site/ Al Musayyib missile testing facility. In doing so, he pointed to a few arrows on the photo, indicating the presence of missile warheads, storehouses and trucks. Mr. Powell alleged that it was a site for the testing and final assembly of missiles used in proscribed activities.

Before presenting his satellite photos, Mr. Powell gave a detailed lecture on the accuracy of photos and their information, explaining how photo analysts spend hours, days and weeks analysing a photo to reach a result. We wonder why these photo analysts failed to inform Mr. Powell of the volume of warheads present at the site and of the types, measurements and ranges of missiles, and whether such measurements fall under the category of proscribed weapons. The photo presented by Mr. Powell was a genuine photo; however, the interpretation was incorrect; the activity that was being carried out when the photo was taken was an inspection of a 70-kilometre range non-proscribed (Luna) missile, named Raad [thunder] by Iraq. It is an old missile that has been dismantled and rehabilitated, as its launch systems have become outdated. This is an ongoing process at that site, which had never stopped. The site had been visited by the inspectors, who had seen the ongoing operations. So, how could Mr. Powell allege that such an installation was performing proscribed operations in the presence of the inspectors?

18. Referring to a British document, Mr. Powell said "I call my colleagues' attention to the fine paper that the United Kingdom distributed yesterday, which describes in exquisite detail Iraqi deception activities".

The British document presented by Mr. Blair to the House of Commons and praised by Mr. Powell is nothing but outdated information plagiarized from a thesis (1991) by Mr. Ibrahim Al Maraashi. Mr. Al Maraashi has talked to the press, indicating that the document was quoted verbatim from his thesis without his permission. This is plagiarism and political cheating. Mr. Blair has alleged that the information included in his report was up to date and proved Iraqi "deception". The information, however, had been collected by a post-graduate student, who published it in 1991. This scandal has received wide coverage by the British press.

19. With regard to reconnaissance flights, Mr. Powell said that "Iraq also has refused to permit any U-2 reconnaissance flights that would give the inspectors a better sense of what is being moved before, during and after inspections. This refusal to allow this kind of reconnaissance is in direct, specific violation of operative paragraph 7 of our resolution 1441 (2002)".

Mr. Powell conveyed the Iraqi position in a distorted way. Iraq has not refused the use of reconnaissance flights by UNMOVIC, including U-2 flights, but has requested the cessation, during such flights, of Anglo-American air violations over the so-called no-fly zones, imposed illegally by the United States in a blatant breach of international law, the United Nations Charter and relevant Security Council

resolutions, including resolution 1441 (2002), providing for respect for Iraq's sovereignty, political independence, and territorial integrity. On 10 February 2003, in response to pressing requests from several States, as well as from Mr. Blix and Mr. ElBaradei, Iraq agreed to U-2, Mirage, and Antonov flights along with other reconnaissance flights.

20. In his statement, Mr. Powell said that Mr. Taha Yasin Ramadan, the Iraqi Vice-President, "accused the inspectors of conducting espionage".

This statement is incorrect. Iraqi officials have criticized inspectors for posing questions of an intelligence nature. They have never accused them of spying. Mr. Powell's comment was out of order, especially if we consider that the United States has used UNSCOM to spy on Iraq, a fact that has been recognized by Ambassador Ekeus, the former chief of UNSCOM. It has been also recognized by several inspectors, including Mr. Scott Ritter, a former American inspector.

21. Mr. Powell said: "Iraq did not meet its obligations under resolution 1441 (2002) to provide a comprehensive list of scientists associated with its weapons of mass destruction programmes. Iraq's list was out of date and contained only about 500 names, despite the fact that UNSCOM had earlier put together a list of about 3,500 names". He added: "For example, in mid-December, weapons experts at one facility were replaced by Iraqi intelligence agents, who were to deceive inspectors". He noted that "Iraqi officials issued a false death certificate for one scientist, and he was sent into hiding. A dozen experts have been placed under house arrest — not in their own houses, but as a group, at one of Saddam Hussein's 'guest houses'".

These are pure lies, and we challenge Mr. Powell to provide a single name of those he termed intelligence agents who presented themselves as "arms experts" or to give the name of the scientist for whom Iraq issued a death certificate while he was still alive.

As for the list of scientists that was provided to UNMOVIC, it coincides with the organizational chart of the persons in charge of previous programmes, required by Mr. Blix from the Iraqi side; when Mr. Blix asked for further names, Iraq provided him with them. The list of names compiled by UNSCOM includes persons who were not in charge of previous programmes, including porters, gardeners, guards, cleaning workers and servants. At all events, UNMOVIC has these names as part of the legacy left by UNSCOM and can meet any one of them whenever it wishes.

22. Mr. Powell concluded that Iraq was hindering the inspectors' work and stated that "What we see is a deliberate campaign to prevent any meaningful inspection work".

In reply to this statement, it is enough to quote Mr. Blix's words before the Security Council on 14 February 2003, when he said that "Since we arrived in Iraq, we have conducted more than 400 inspections covering more than 300 sites. All inspections were performed without notice and access was always provided promptly". He added that "the inspections have taken place throughout Iraq at industrial sites, ammunition depots, research centers, universities, presidential sites, mobile laboratories, private houses, missile production facilities, military camps and agricultural sites". He stated that "through the inspections conducted so far, we have obtained a good knowledge of the industrial and scientific landscape of Iraq, as well

as of its missile capability". So where is the hindrance to inspections referred to by Mr. Powell?

23. Secretary of State Powell went on to talk about the previous arms programme as if it were still an ongoing programme and its activities were running regularly. On the biological part he said that "Iraq declared 8,500 litres of anthrax, but UNSCOM estimates that Iraq could have produced 25,000 litres. If concentrated into this dry form, this amount would be enough to fill tens upon tens upon tens of thousands of teaspoons — and Iraq has not verifiably accounted for even one teaspoonful of this deadly material".

The story of the previous Iraqi biological programme, that no longer exists, is clear. We said that in our comprehensive declaration of 7 December 2002. Inspectors conducted tests and interviews that confirmed our declaration. As for the remaining outstanding issues, the panel chaired by Ambassador Amorim attentively studied the matter and proposed to merge these issues in the ongoing monitoring phase. Security Council resolution 1284 (1999) adopted Ambassador Amorim's recommendation, as did UNMOVIC in its work plan. At the beginning of 2002, we asked UNMOVIC to engage in technical discussions on the outstanding disarmament issues, including anthrax, to review the evidence we produced to prove that Iraq is free from weapons of mass destruction and to verify them scientifically. We made proposals on how to proceed in this respect, but Mr. Blix refused to engage in any discussion about the outstanding issues. Mr. Powell's allegation that Iraq has 8,500 litres of anthrax and is capable of transforming it into a dry form ignores the fact that Iraq has not been able to dry anthrax and that the quantity we produced was in liquid form. Even if this quantity existed, its validity would have expired many years ago.

24. Mr. Powell then went on to make allegations about the chemical file in an attempt to terrorize the world with the issue of Iraq's possession of VX weapons. He said that the UNSCOM position in 1999 referred to 1.5 tons of this substance produced in 1990 and that Iraq had failed to provide sufficient evidence of its destruction. In fact, Iraq provided evidence that this quantity was destroyed because of its instability and the decomposed residues were disposed of in a certain area. UNSCOM was able to verify the existence of decomposed residues of VX but could not determine the quantity. The matter remained among the outstanding issues since 1998; Iraq is seeking its resolution in cooperation with UNMOVIC through a quantitative analysis of the area where the VX was destroyed. Concerning Mr. Powell's allegation that since the international inspectors left Iraq in 1998, "we have amassed much intelligence indicating that Iraq is continuing to make these weapons", UNMOVIC and IAEA took note of and verified all the information gathered by the United States and contained in the report that accompanied the address of the United States President to the General Assembly on 12 September 2002, the Central Intelligence Agency report entitled "Iraqi arms of mass destruction" of October 2002, the report of the British Prime Minister Tony Blair of September 2002 entitled "Iraqi arms of mass destruction: the British Government evaluation", and Mr. Powell's speech in the Security Council on 5 February 2003 to which we are replying. Mr. Blix's conclusion, which he presented to the Security Council on 14 February 2003, was that "so far, UNMOVIC has found no weapons of mass destruction" and Mr. ElBaradei concluded that "we have to date found no evidence of prohibited nuclear activities in Iraq".

25. Mr. Powell said that "we have firsthand descriptions of biological weapons factories on wheels and on rails. The trucks and train cars are easily moved and are designed to evade detection by inspectors".

If Mr. Powell had such evidence, he would have submitted it to the inspectors. UNMOVIC and IAEA are inspecting and monitoring all over Iraq but have found no evidence to confirm the authenticity of these allegations. Even after this statement by Mr. Powell, UNMOVIC and IAEA intensified truck inspections but there was still no evidence supporting Mr. Powell's allegations.

26. Mr. Powell stated that "These inspections would be unlikely — any inspections of such facilities would be unlikely — to turn up anything prohibited, especially if there is any warning that the inspections are coming."

Suffice it to recall that Mr. Blix said in his report to the Security Council on 14 February 2003 that "in no case have we seen convincing evidence that the Iraqi side knew in advance that the inspectors were coming", which means that all inspections were conducted without prior notice to the Iraqi side. On the other hand, the allegation of the inspectors' incapacity to detect prohibited activities is an attempt to conceal the United States' failure to convince the inspectors of its false allegations. The inspectors in Iraq have unmatched competence in the history of disarmament operations. Their number exceeds 120 and they conduct more than 10 inspections every day with six levels of air control, probes, sensors and radiometers that detect any prohibited activity. In practical terms, it is impossible to hide activities related to weapons of mass destruction from this kind of invasive inspection and the very sophisticated equipment that is used.

27. Mr. Powell said that "We have no indication that Saddam Hussein has ever abandoned his nuclear weapons programme. On the contrary, we have more than a decade of proof that he remains determined to acquire nuclear weapons".

In reply to this false allegation, it is enough to quote Mr. ElBaradei in his report to the Security Council on 14 February 2003 when he said that "As I have reported on numerous occasions, by December 1998 IAEA concluded that it had neutralized Iraq's past nuclear programme and that therefore no unresolved disarmament issues remained at that time". He added that "we have to date found no evidence of prohibited nuclear activities in Iraq".

28. Mr. Powell said that Iraq "is determined to get its hands on a nuclear bomb. It is so determined that it has made repeated covert attempts to acquire high-specification aluminium tubes from 11 different countries — even after inspections resumed".

The best reply to this allegation is to quote the report of IAEA contained in document S/2003/95 annexed to the report by Mr. ElBaradei to the Security Council on 27 January 2003. It says "As a result of these inspection efforts, it has been possible to confirm the existence of a programme for producing 81-millimetre rockets. The IAEA's analysis to date indicates that the specifications of the aluminium tubes recently sought by Iraq appear to be consistent with reverse engineering of rockets. While it would be possible to modify such tubes for the manufacture of centrifuges, they are not directly suitable for such use".

29. Mr. Powell said that Iraq "has been busy trying to maintain the other key parts of its nuclear programme, particularly its cadre of key nuclear scientists".

The cadre of Iraqi nuclear scientists is in the field of civilian activities, and IAEA is fully aware of their activities as they were entirely declared in detail during the period of the absence of inspectors from 1998 until now in the nuclear chapter of the second part of the Iraqi declaration of 7 December 2002. Mr. Powell's reference reveals the ill will that the American administration feels towards scientific progress and scientists in Iraq and shows its desire to keep Iraq backward.

30. Mr. Powell said that Iraq "retains a covert force of up to a few dozen SCUD-variant ballistic missiles. These are missiles with a range of 650 to 900 kilometres".

This is an obvious lie as the physical balancing of missiles with prohibited ranges was fully verified by UNSCOM in 1997. There is no evidence of the existence of any prohibited missiles. UNSCOM indicated in its report (S/1997/774, paragraph 123) that it verified all the 819 missiles, except for two, remains of which were found, but the Commission could not establish their serial numbers due to damage.

31. Mr. Powell said that "Iraq has programmes that are intended to produce ballistic missiles that fly over 1,000 kilometres".

This is a mere fallacious allegation that is baseless and absolutely unsubstantiated.

32. Presenting a satellite photograph, Mr. Powell said that "the test stand on the right is clearly intended for long-range missiles that can fly 1,200 kilometres. This photograph was taken in April 2002. Since then, the test stand has been finished and a roof has been put over it so that it would be harder for satellites to see what is going on underneath the test stand."

In order to terrorize the audience, Mr. Powell alleged that the exhaust vent of the test stand is five times longer than that of the stand next to it in the photograph and that this is a big size intended for a huge missile, forgetting that the inspectors are in Iraq now and that they have seen everything themselves. What we want to say is that this site is intended for horizontal, not vertical, engine testing and that the engine being tested is that of a small missile. Even if the engine is small, it requires a large exhaust vent, since testing is horizontal. The inspectors checked everything in this site, including the computer rooms where information on the missile and the conducted tests and examinations are kept. Mr. Powell talked about some construction work under way in the site in order to hide it from satellite photography with a roof. The truth is that there is a roof being built to protect the site from weather conditions, not for the purpose mentioned by Mr. Powell.

33. Mr. Powell said: "But what I want to bring to your attention today is the potentially much more sinister nexus between Iraq and the Al Qaeda terrorist network, a nexus that combines classic terrorist organizations and modern methods of murder. Iraq today harbors a deadly terrorist network headed by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, an associate and collaborator of Osama bin Laden and his Al Qaeda lieutenants."

This is an outright lie, as Iraq, through its leader, glorious Saddam Hussein, the President of the Republic, declared on 4 February 2003 that Iraq has no links with the Al Qaeda organization. Concerning the issue of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the facts are as follows:

During November 2002, the Jordanian Government informed us that the Jordanian Ahmad Fudail Nazal Al-Khalaila, alias Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, and a number of his followers had entered Iraq using numerous passports and identities and with different names because they were wanted for domestic proceedings and were accused of belonging to the Al Qaeda organization. In the light of this information, the Iraqi security services started searching for them and made exceptional efforts in this regard, due to the threat that this matter poses to Iraqi national security and the violation it represents to the laws in force that prohibit any terrorist activity. The results were as follows:

Concerning the Jordanian Ahmad Fudail Nazal Al-Khalaila (Abu Musab al-Zarqawi), no evidence is available with regard to him entering Iraq over any border crossing either under his real name or using the aliases that the Jordanian side indicated to us. The information which is available about him is that he is in the governorate of Al-Sulaymaniyah, Al-Bayara region, in the north of Iraq that has not been under the central authority since 1991. This information was broadcast by a radio station operating from the northern region on 1 February 2003. The Government of Iraq confirms that no governmental or non-governmental party (under Iraqi State control) has previously or currently held a meeting with this person. As for the remaining names contained in the request by the Jordanian side, there is no evidence at present that they are in Iraq. The search for them is still under way, and in this respect, we are in contact with the Jordanian side as we inform them step by step about the results of our follow up, with the last contact made a few days before Colin Powell's speech in the Council.

These terrorist elements are capable of entering and exiting many countries as they use false passports and names with different nationalities; no country can claim itself immune from infiltration by these elements, especially when they use other names than those known to security services. The United States is well aware of this fact and knows that the elements act in this way in all countries in the world, including America. Does their entering any country, including America, without its knowledge constitute an accusation of its link to and relation with this organization?

As for the Ansar Al-Islam organization, the fact is that after the attack, on 22 September 2001, by elements of Ansar Al-Islam against Jalal Talbani's group that controls the governorate of Sulaymaniyah (since 1991), in the region of Halbjah and Taweelah, in the north of Iraq which is not under government control, Mr. Talbani asked Iraq's leadership to support him by providing him with light arms and equipment to face the said organization. The leadership met his request and provided him with arms and equipment that were sent to him in Al-Sulaymaniyah on 23 September 2001.

On 19 November 2002, we provided Talbani's group with another batch of light weapons and equipment to confront the Ansar Al-Islam organization. These facts are documented, as a number of these elements infiltrated Iraqi cities and after having been arrested, they confessed to sabotage operations in Baghdad and some Iraqi cities (bombing, murder and armed assault, including the bombing of a restaurant in a Baghdad district, causing loss of life and material damage). These operations were led by the criminal Tahseen Ali Abdul-Aziz, one of the members of the organization. This material evidence proves the fallacy of the allegations by the American Administration. This group is beyond the control of the Government of Iraq and is under the control of Jalal Talbani, a friend of the United States. The Iraqi

authorities provided Talbani's group with arms and equipment to help them face the Ansar Al-Islam organization.

On the other hand, it is the United States that refused the cooperation offered by Iraq to extradite Abdu-Rahman Yaseen, accused in the World Trade Center incident in 1993.

That individual is an American citizen of Iraqi origin, born in 1958, in the state of Indiana, United States of America. He spent his childhood there, then he came back to Iraq. In 1992, he returned to the United States to join his mother and brother who were living there. The American Embassy in Amman promptly granted him a passport.

During his stay in the United States, he got to know the accused Ramzi Ahmad Yusif, who recruited and convinced him to participate in the World Trade Center bombing in 1993. He participated in preparing the explosives at that time, but withdrew before executing the operation because a chemical liquid was spilt over his body.

One day after bombing the World Trade Center, the Federal Bureau of Investigation summoned him and preliminarily interviewed him; he was then released and he went to Jordan and then to Iraq.

Later in 1993, the American authorities declared that an award of 25,000 dollars would be given to anyone having information about Abdu-Rahman Yaseen; they then raised the award to 25 million dollars.

On 10 January 1994, the Iraqi security services had information on a person named Abdu-Rahman Yaseen, wanted by the Pakistani authorities that accuse him of participating in the World Trade Center bombing in New York. After searching for him, the Iraqi authorities arrested him on 3 April 1994, interviewed him and he admitted that he had links with the perpetrators of the World Trade Center bombing, particularly with Ramzi Ahmad Yusif.

On 12 April 1994, the Iraqi Minister of Information declared, in a press conference, that Iraq had informed the United States of important information about the World Trade Center bombing in New York, and that Iraq requested Americans to set up a committee supervised by the United States Congress in order to allow Iraq to transmit the information to Washington. The United States did not respond to the request.

Iraq then offered to extradite the accused to the American authorities through an international mediator. Again, until now the American authorities have officially refused the offer.

In 2002, the American television network CBS conducted an interview with the said person in the programme "60 Minutes"; he admitted to having a role in the World Trade Center bombing and said that he was held in custody in Baghdad. Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz commented on the interview and said that the person exists and that Iraq is ready to extradite him to the American authorities. The Government of Iraq would like to reaffirm its readiness to extradite the accused officially to the American authorities.

34. Mr. Powell accused Iraq, saying that its use of "mustard and nerve gases against the Kurds in 1988 was one of the twentieth century's most horrible atrocities".

We would like to remind Mr. Powell of the report issued in 1990 by the American Institute of Strategic Studies entitled "Iraqi power and American security in the Middle East". The report said that it was Iranian bombing with chemical weapons that caused the death of Kurds in Halabjah. We also refer him to an article by Steven Peltier published in *The New York Times* on 31 December 2002, saying that "it is Iranian gas that killed Kurds in Halabjah" according to American intelligence and military information.

Excellency,

The above presentation demonstrates with facts and evidence that the United States Secretary of State attempted to mislead the Security Council and the United Nations, and produced false allegations and proof to serve as a cover for the American aggression that is planned against Iraq. Now, the question is the following: is it acceptable that the main responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security should be entrusted to officials practising open fraud and lies who seek to use the Security Council and the United Nations as a means of furthering the aggressive foreign policy of their country?

(*Signed*) Naji **Sabri**
Minister for Foreign Affairs
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